

566 it was said, the departed spirit of the victim of this atrocity.

Such, then, are some of the conditions under which the Miao lived. Round their necks were the millstones of ignorance and oppression, and humanly speaking, they could never climb higher. They were chained in the Slough of Despond.

131 And now let us travel to Miao-land, where these
 • 489 men and women dwell, a people who are amongst
 [423] the most needy in the world. "Miao-land" is
 not a stretch of country where you will find Flowery
 Miao exclusively, because the Miao do not possess
 land. Miao-land is a section of China inhabited
 by a preponderance of Chinese, patches of Nosu
 and, in less accessible regions, large communities
 of Miao.

Embarking on either a French or a British steamer in that most beautiful harbour of Hong-kong, we will slip down the China coast and after two, three or four days glide gently up the delta of the Red River into Haiphong. Here we will board a train which, after chugging for three days (at times the gradient is so steep that one feels that by leaning forward one could help the puffing engine), the train will deposit you in Yunnanfu, the capital of the province of Yunnan. The Tonkin-Yunnan railway, with its ascending slopes, its dauntless bridges, its viaducts and tortuous tunnels, is one of the engineering feats of the world of which the French nation may justly be proud. Kunming (Yunnanfu) is the terminus, but our

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destination still lies from ten to twelve days farther north. The first day's journey may be made by recently introduced motor buses, but the last nine days must be travelled either in a sedan chair or on the back of a Yunnan pony. Yunnan ponies are wonderful beasts, being as sure-footed as goats. If you are particularly energetic you might walk. It is a charming, picturesque journey running over wild wooded hills, down beautiful valleys, past smiling landscapes. At one point the mountains rise to more than ten thousand feet above sea-level, and along this route you see China as she has been for centuries—there have been but few changes. Each day you travel twenty-five or thirty miles and then rest at some little wayside inn, where you meet with a great deal of kindness. Naturally, these inns are neither so comfortable nor so sanitary as modern European hotels, and in summer they are always, in one sense, overcrowded. One hears a good deal these days of China's teeming population; you come into close personal contact with it in those inns and a tin of Keating's Insect Powder comes as a boon and a blessing to men. The historian Gibbon was amused by the Emperor Julian's boast that "his beard was populous". In some of these remote Chinese inns within an hour of retiring for the night the whole body can be populous. On such a journey one meets with amusing experiences. One night in such an inn a Chinese servant was arranging the missionary's blankets on one of the Chinese roughly made wooden bedsteads which was provided. A coolie